

**CLEAN VERSION OF AMENDED SPECIFICATION**

The new abstract should read as follows.

A reactor for the catalytic oxidation of ammonia to form nitrogen oxides which has a noble metal gauze catalyst and a heat exchanger in that order in the direction of flow, a catalyst for the decomposition of N<sub>2</sub>O is located between the noble metal gauze catalyst and the heat exchanger and in a process for the catalytic decomposition of N<sub>2</sub>O in a gas mixture obtained in the preparation of nitric acid by catalytic oxidation of ammonia, where the N<sub>2</sub>O is decomposed catalytically over a catalyst for the decomposition of N<sub>2</sub>O, the hot gas mixture obtained from the catalytic oxidation of ammonia is brought to contact with the catalyst for the decomposition of N<sub>2</sub>O prior to subsequent cooling.

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